



THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR QUALITY

## Domaine de Nerleux • Saumur-Champigny

Amélie Neau is a ninth generation vigneron and daughter of Régis Neau, who grew-up in the wonderland town of Saint-Cyr-en-Bourg. The Neau family property is 50 hectares and will charm you with its 17th and 18th century buildings made from the local yellowish limestone rock, tuffeau jaune. The same rock (part of Loire's greater Turonian plateau) is the foundation of their vineyards, most notably their two monopoles, Clos des Châtains and Les Loups Noirs, which have been the stronghold of the Domaine since their restoration in the 1930s and 1940s. If you look up Nerleux on Google Maps, then you'll notice that they are sandwiched between two VIP estates. They have been approached, many times, to sell their land, but they are stubborn in their old-school ways. Their soils have never touched a synthetic chemical or fertilizer; that's nine generations of organic, and their discipline in the vineyard matches their logic in the cellar. They are advocates of natural yeasts and favor cement, steel, and demi-muids over new oak... pure Cabernet Franc goodness.

### "Clos des Châtains" Vieilles Vignes Saumur-Champigny 2019

Knobby old-vines of Châtains born in 1953 (with 50% replanting in the 1990s), this wine remains one of the best values for pure-joy Cabernet Franc. The fruit, untouched by synthetic chemicals, is fermented in cement, then moves to steel where it rests for about a year. Bottled unfiltered (slightly fined), this is textbook Loire-style Cabernet Franc: pinched blackberries and black cherries greeted by a firm handshake of tannin, the warmth of spice and candied violet, and freshness of aloe vera.

Amélie Neau is very happy with her 2019 "Clos des Châtains," and we think you will be too: "The robe is garnet with glints of purple, a sign of perfect ripeness of the grapes and of particular care during ageing. The nose gradually reveals itself around aromas of baked red and black fruits, a floral hint of iris and a touch of brown tobacco, expressing a beautiful smoothness and great depth. The mouth is ample. I find all the aromatic and structural characteristics of a most classic Cabernet Franc here. The tannins are present, but not aggressive, bringing length to the wine and allowing it to respond so well to dishes of savory meats and a great many cheeses."

